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# 2015 National Prison Braille Forum



**October 7, 2015**

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Louisville, Kentucky

HV1783  
.N734  
2015





**The mission of the National Prison Braille Network (NPBN) is twofold:**



To support and promote accessible media production facilities in prisons across the U.S. as major sources of high quality Braille and experienced braille transcribers,



To help inmate transcribers prepare for successful careers as accessible media producers upon release.





## 15th Annual

# National Prison Braille Forum: Transition Success

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

7:30 am	Breakfast	
8:15	Welcome	Nancy Lacewell Gary Mudd
	National Prison Braille Network update	Becky Snider
	Stipend recipient introductions	Nancy Lacewell
	Forum photography, social media, and KCIW tour on Thursday	Rob Guillen
9:00	<b>BTAP Status Report, next steps</b>	
	Gary Mudd, Nancy Lacewell Becky Snider Jayma Hawkins Jan Carroll Jason Wilson	
	15 Minute Break	
	"Across the country" program reports	
11:30	Please join us for a deli buffet lunch in the Center Ballroom	
1:00 pm	APH Update	Gary Mudd
	Accessible Textbooks, UEB status	Jane Thompson
	Digital Braille Technology	Gary Mudd
	Refreshabraille 18 demonstration	
	<b>Panel discussion: Transition Success</b>	Jayma Hawkins
	Peggy Schuetz, CA Terry Harris, CA Cindy Olmstead, MI John Romeo, IA Guy Toles, GA Delores Billman, TX	
	15 Minute Break	
	"Across the country" program reports	
	Parking lot issues	
5:00	Adjourn	





American Printing House  
for the Blind, Inc.

The mission of the National Prison Braille Network (NPBN) is twofold:

- To support and promote accessible media production facilities in prisons across the U.S. as major sources of high quality braille and experienced braille transcribers,
- To help inmate transcribers prepare for successful careers as accessible media producers upon release.

### **Network Services**

- ✓ Centralized communication via a webpage ([www.aph.org/pbf](http://www.aph.org/pbf)), email and U.S. mail correspondence with members, network gatherings (such as the annual National Prison Braille Forum and periodic focus groups), and the use of webcasts, teleconferences, and a listserv when appropriate.
- ✓ A source of information and educational materials related to accessible media production facilities inside prisons and individual prison braille programs across the country.
- ✓ Support for individual programs, such as the distribution of news releases, articles, publications, and media coverage highlighting program accomplishments, letters of support for expansion efforts, and grant applications.
- ✓ Braille work referral: passing braille jobs along to others in the network when production capacity is reached, and helping programs secure braille jobs when possible.
- ✓ Training and consultation within prisons through staff visits, presentations, transcriber workshops, meetings with corrections staff, and electronic programs via the internet.
- ✓ Administer the Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program (BTAP), designed to assist qualified inmate transcribers in establishing successful careers by offering apprenticeships at APH upon release.

September 24, 2015





## About the Federal Quota Program

The Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind was passed by Congress in 1879 to provide adapted educational materials to eligible students working at less than college level who meet the definition of blindness. An annual registration of eligible students determines a per-capita amount of money designated for the purchase of educational materials produced by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). These funds are credited to Federal Quota accounts, which are maintained and administered by APH and its Ex Officio Trustees (EOTs) throughout the country and outlying areas.

APH is responsible for the overall administration of this law, which is accomplished through a network of professionals designated as EOTs. These professionals are the heads of residential schools for the blind; chief state school officers of each state department of education; heads of private, nonprofit schools for the blind; heads of programs for students who are multiply disabled; and heads of rehabilitation agencies. EOTs in each state and outlying area are legally entrusted with the administration of the Federal Quota Program for students within their systems. Registration of students and all orders for materials to be purchased with Federal Quota funds must be directed through EOTs.

For over 130 years, the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind has been affecting positive change in the lives of Americans who are visually impaired. Through materials that range from accessible books to fine motor development materials, from braille writing equipment to talking computer products and digital technology, APH and the Act address the specific learning needs that a vision loss creates.

*The purpose of the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind is to place the most appropriate educational aids, tools, and supplies in the hands and lives of every student with vision loss below college level. APH helps these students achieve in the classroom and succeed in the workplace.*



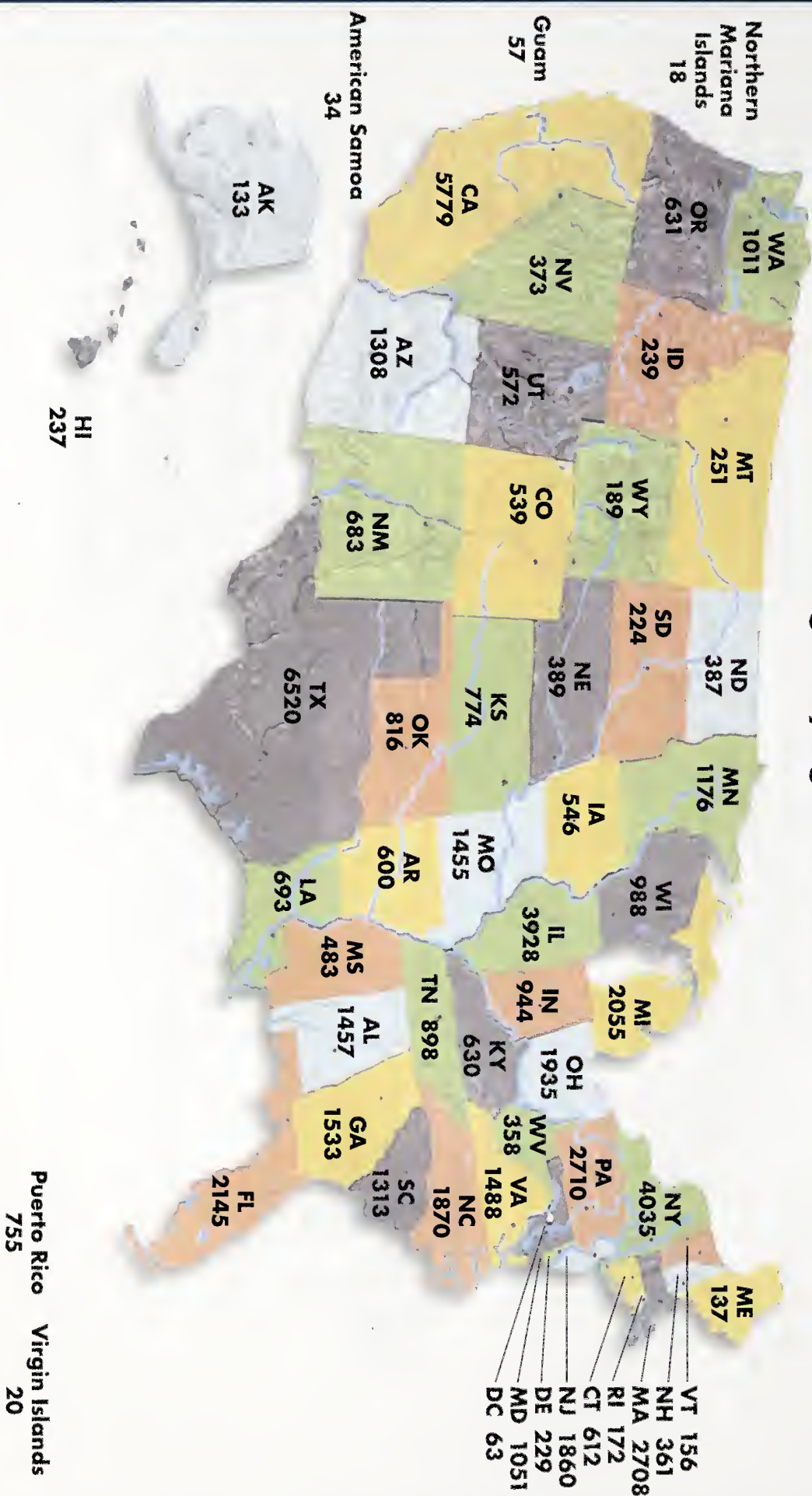
American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.  
800.223.1839 • [info@aph.org](mailto:info@aph.org) • [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

# Act to Promote the Education of the Blind of 1879

Number of Blind and Visually Impaired Students  
Registered in the Federal Quota Program

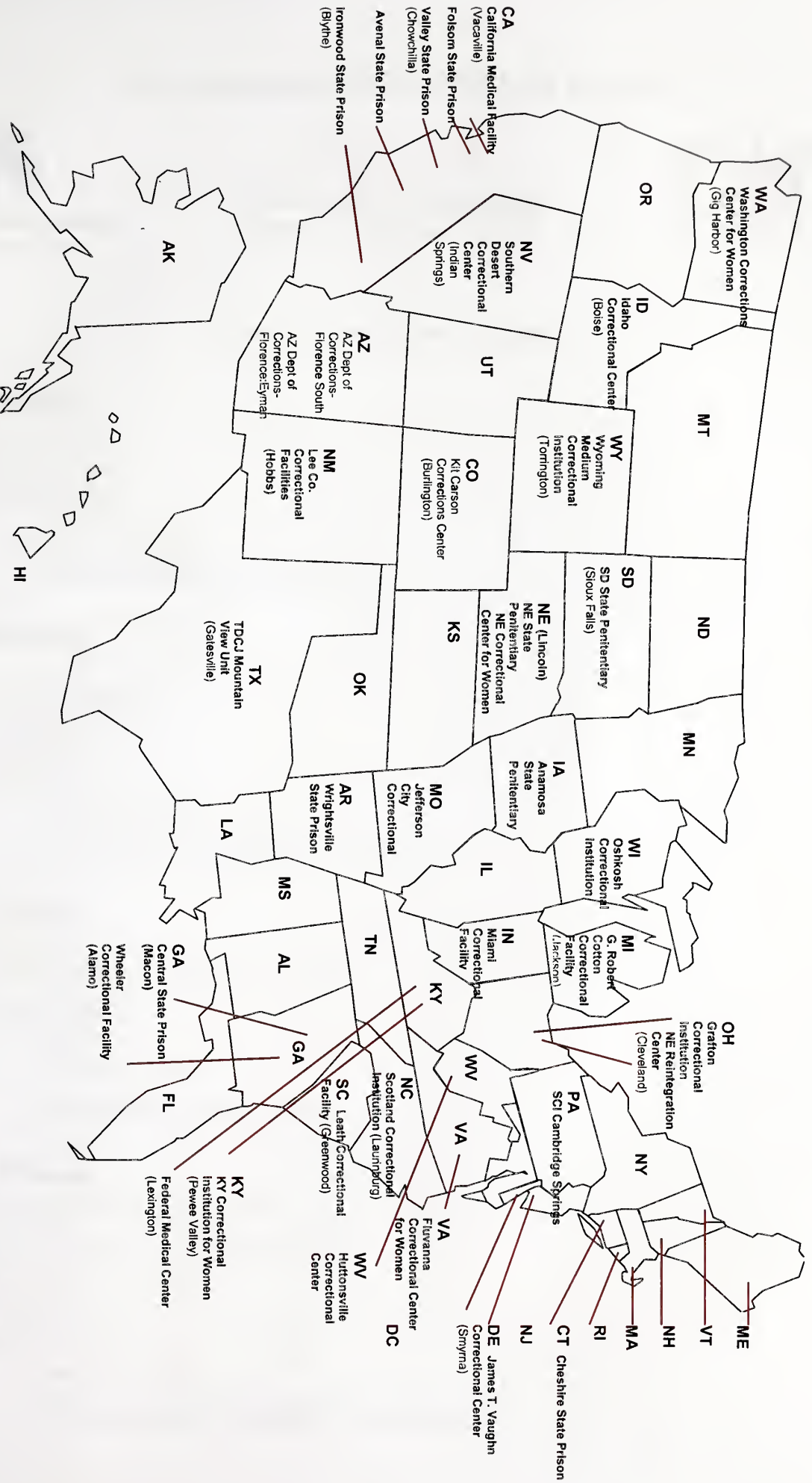
As of January 2015

Total Students in the United States,  
including Outlying Areas: 62,528





# Prison Braille Programs Across the United States 36 programs in 27 states







## 2015 National Prison Braille Forum



American Printing House  
for the Blind, Inc.

October 7, 2015

### Roster of Participants

\* *APH Ex Officio Trustee*



*64 participants from 19 states*

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## **2015 National Prison Braille Forum**

Registration as of September 30, 2015

64 people from 19 states

### **State Order**

*\*Indicates those who have signed up for the tour of  
KCI Braille Services on Thursday, October 8.*

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Milton Goddard      California Corrections  
\*Terry Harris      Gold Country Transcribing  
Grant Horrocks      CTEBVI (California Transcribers and Educators of the BVI)  
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## ***2015 National Prison Braille Forum***

### **Guidelines for 2-5 minute reports**

Each year at the National Prison Braille Forum, participants are asked to report on the prison braille programs you work with, or if you are not currently working with a program, to tell us a bit about yourself and your interest in prison braille programs (maximum: 2 minutes). If more than one person from the same program attends the Forum, we ask that you select a spokesperson for the group, who will then introduce his or her colleagues (maximum: 5 minutes).

*Please give us an update on your prison braille program...*

- Your name and job title
- Introduce colleagues, including their job titles
- State
- Name of prison
- Name of program
- When program began
- Category of program (educational/vocational, prison industries, non-profit...)
- Partners (school for the blind, corrections industries...)
- Number of men and/or women currently in program
- Services offered (braille, large print, electronic media...)
- Primary customers
- Major changes since the program began (if any)
- Major challenges: issues you have successfully addressed and/or areas in which you are facing challenges and could use advice
- Expertise you can offer others
- Advice to "beginners" – either professionals hoping to start prison braille programs, or graduates of programs starting work on the outside
- Comments about your experience with transition success

*For Forum participants not currently working with a braille program, tell us about yourself...*

- Your name and job title
- State
- Agency or business
- Products and/or services provided by you and/or an agency
- Your interest in prison braille programs
- Major challenges you currently face
- Advice/expertise to share with others
- Help needed



# ***Poughkeepsie Journal***

## **Former prison superintendent pens book, gives local talk**

Journal staff

9:43 p.m. EDT August 19, 2015



(Photo: Courtesy photo)

David Miller, former superintendent at Eastern New York Correctional Facility, spoke at the May program of the Town of Lloyd Historical Preservation Society in Highland about Eastern's history, philosophy and successes.

Miller is the author of "Punishment Enough: A Different Approach to Doing Time." He had three reasons for writing the book, he explained, and were reflected in his presentation:

First, so his grandchildren wouldn't equate him — as a warden — with the brutal and crooked warden in the movie, "The Shawshank Redemption."

Second, to tell the story of Eastern, an institution with a long history and programs that focused on self-sufficiency in its early years when inmates maintained a garden and cared for livestock, and on rehabilitation since the 1930s and '40s, with educational, vocational and recreational programs. Braille transcription, in which inmates translate books into Braille for schools and other institutions, is a skill that some inmates have been able to turn into careers upon their release, he said.

Third, and perhaps the most compelling reason Miller said he wrote the book, was to dispel the myth that everyone in prison gets out, gets a gun, commits another crime, and goes back in.

There are many inmates, he said, according to the written release, who did bad things that got them sent to prison, used their time there productively to make major changes, and came out to become productive citizens, paying taxes and leading law-abiding lives. To emphasize that, he brought with him a former inmate, Lou Mortillero, who contributed a chapter to Miller's book, which he read to the audience in Highland.

Despite spending the next 25 years of his life in prison, Mortillero earned three degrees — an associate degree from SUNY Ulster and bachelor's and master's degrees from SUNY New Paltz. At Eastern, he dealt with his alcohol addiction through prison programs and spent years in therapy dealing with his guilt and remorse for taking "a man's life." He credits role models and mentors three, including Miller; Vinnie Basilicato, who ran a music program at Eastern, first as an employee and then as a volunteer, and helped Mortillero revive his love of playing the guitar; and Bill and Susan Philliber, adjunct professors at the graduate degree program in Eastern, whose company, Philliber Research & Evaluation, he works for today as a data analyst.

"Having changed from the inside out, I was prepared for the challenges of the adjustments I needed to make upon release," he writes in Miller's book, crediting this change to Eastern.

For information about upcoming Town of Lloyd Historical Society programs, visit [www.tolhps.org](http://www.tolhps.org), look for Town of Lloyd Historical Preservation Society on Facebook or call 845-255-7742.

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NOTE: The braille program at Eastern New York Correctional Facility closed sometime in the past two or three years.







# UNUSUAL GUEST

It is rare that an offender is able to address the Parole Board, outside a revocation hearing. It is even rarer that a paroled offender attends a monthly board meeting. That however happened at the May 5th meeting.

Parolee Randy Davis is a Braille specialist working at Georgia Tech. Davis took time off from work to speak to the Parole Board at the Board's monthly meeting in Atlanta. It was the Department of Corrections' Braille Transcribers program that gave Davis an opportunity at a second chance in the free world.

"I had the opportunity to get the position (Georgia Tech) because of prison. I devoted my time to reconstructing who I was," stated Davis. He says the opportunity to learn Braille transcribing "revealed" itself in Prison. "So I jumped at the opportunity and my journey with Braille began."

Davis says Georgia's visually impaired children benefit from the prison Braille program. "The focus of the prison inmate training program is to produce Braille books for those children. It was an opportunity to help another; that was the main draw. The amazing thing is that I received more help than I gave. I'm here today because of that program and the opportunity it gave me. It has afforded me to advance myself and now I'm able to give

back by training inmates at other prison Braille programs. That opportunity really helped rebuild my self-esteem."

Davis is using his skills, learned in prison, on his job working for AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center at Georgia Tech, where Braille textbooks are produced and shipped to customers.

Guy Toles, is Davis' supervisor at AMAC and says, "He's among the most qualified Braille transcribers in the country."

Davis says one of his goals is to further promote prison Braille programs as a means for rehabilitating inmates and assisting them as they re-enter society.

"That's my greatest joy, to help both sides, the kids that need these materials and the men and women who are getting the opportunity to produce these materials," In prison, Davis said.

He thanked the Board for providing him the opportunity through a parole release.

(continued on the next page)

"This opportunity means so much, not only to me, but to my new daughter, my family and mostly to the kids who we provide the text books for so they have the opportunity to further their education. It's wonderful to be a part of that."

Parole Board Chairman Terry Barnard invited Davis to speak at the meeting. Barnard says through opportunities provided to inmates in the prison system, many offenders are successful while under parole supervision.

"Mr. Davis is just one example of parole success in Georgia. Offenders who take advantage of the opportunities that exist in prison and once on parole, can be successful and at the same time provide for safer communities," Barnard said.

Barnard noted Georgia's parole success rate of 72% is among the highest in the nation and well above the national average.

To learn more about the Department of Corrections' Braille Transcribers program visit [http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/NewsRoom/VideoLibrary/RTVideo\\_Braille.html](http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/NewsRoom/VideoLibrary/RTVideo_Braille.html).

At right is Davis with Toles and Chris Lee, his Dept. Director. [www.amacusg.org](http://www.amacusg.org)



# THANKS BOARD

☆☆

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF PARDONS & PAROLES

## Georgia Parole Review

ISSUE 02 / 2015 Summer Edition

Rare guest  
thanks  
Board at  
monthly  
meeting





15th Annual  
**National Prison Braille Forum**  
October 7, 2015

**...MOVING FORWARD...**

Please take a few minutes to give us some feedback  
from your participation in the 2015 NPBF.

Was your time at the Forum today well spent? Why or why not?

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Do you have suggestions for ways in which the Braille Transcriber Apprentice  
Program (BTAP) could be improved? If so, please tell us how.

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Will you make changes or improvements to the assistance your program offers  
inmates being released based on discussion at today's Forum? If so, how?

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One thing I did not get to say/talk about today during the Forum is...

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**Thank you!**

Please return feedback forms to  
**Becky Snider**  
American Printing House for the Blind  
1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206  
rsnider@aph.org; fax 502-899-2363





# **Acronyms**

## **Field of Vision/Blindness**

BVI	Blind and visually impaired
EBAE	English Braille American Edition
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
UEB	Unified English Braille code

## **Organizations, Agencies, and Corporations**

ACB	American Council of the Blind
AER	Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of BVI
AFB	American Foundation for the Blind
APH	American Printing House for the Blind
BANA	Braille Authority of North America
COSB	Council of Schools for the Blind
CTEBVI	California Transcribers and Educators of the Blind and Visually Impaired
IMRC/IRC	Instructional (Materials) Resource Center
NBA	National Braille Association
NFB	National Federation of the Blind
NLS	National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress

## **Field of Corrections**

ACA	American Correctional Association
BJA	Bureau of Justice Assistance
CEA	Correctional Education Association
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOC	Department of Corrections
NCIA	National Correctional Industries Association
NRRC	National Reentry Resource Center



## Prison Braille Programs Across the United States

36 programs in 27 states

(known to be operating as of July 31, 2015)

<u>State/Program</u>	<u>Operated by</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Inmates/ Transcribers</u>
<b>Arizona</b>				
1. Arizona Department of Corrections-Florence Eyman	Fndn. for Blind	1995	male	8/8
2. Arizona Department of Corrections-Florence South	Fndn. for Blind	1995	male	8/8
<b>Arkansas</b>				
3. Wrightsville Correctional Facility Braille Unit (Wrightsville)	school for the blind	1984	male	3/3
<b>California</b>				
4. Avenal State Prison (Avenal)	community college	2005	male	11/3
5. California Medical Facility (Vacaville)	nonprofit corp.	1960	male	14/3
6. Folsom State Prison (Folsom)	industries	1989	male	17/16
7. Ironwood State Prison (Blythe)	community college	2008	male	24/12
8. Valley State Prison (Chowchilla)	volunteer/education	2015	male	30/1
<b>Colorado</b>				
9. Kit Carson Corrections Center (Burlington)	school f/t blind	2013	male	11/8
<b>Connecticut</b>				
10. Cheshire State Prison (Cheshire)	corrections	1990	male	8/5
<b>Delaware</b>				
11. James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (Smyrna)	DE DVI & Corrections	1989	male	11/10
<b>Georgia</b>				
12. Central State Prison (Macon)	education	2006	male	19/18
13. Wheeler Correctional Facility (Alamo)	corrections corp/program	2014	male	
<b>Idaho</b>				
14. Idaho Correctional Center (Boise)	education	2001	male	15/10
<b>Indiana</b>				
15. Miami Correctional Facility (Bunker Hill)	education & industries	2008	male	37/10

<u>State/Program</u>	<u>Operated by</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>#Inmates/ Transscribers</u>
<b>Iowa</b>				
16. Anamosa State Penitentiary (Anamosa)	industries	1992	male	
<b>Kentucky</b>				
17. Federal Medical Center-Lexington (Lexington)	education	1995	male/female	25/4
18. KY Correctional Institution for Women (Pewee Valley)	industries	2000	female	16/15
<b>Michigan</b>				
19. G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility (Jackson)	nonprofit corp.	1962	male	45/29
<b>Missouri</b>				
20. Jefferson City Correctional Center (Jefferson City)	MO Rehab Svcs f/t Blind	1975	male	19/15
<b>Nebraska</b>				
21. Nebraska Correctional Center for Women (York)	industries	2005	female	
22. Nebraska State Penitentiary (Lincoln)	industries	1980	male	36/14
<b>Nevada</b>				
23. Southern Desert Correctional Center (Indian Springs)	ed. & Clark Co. Adult Ed	1988	male	
<b>New Mexico</b>				
24. Lea County Correctional Facilities (Hobbs)		2015	male	40
<b>North Carolina</b>				
25. Scotland Correctional Institution (Laurinburg)	industries	2011	male	21/21
<b>Ohio</b>				
26. Grafton Correctional Institution (Grafton)	industries	1991	male	45/23
27. Northeast Reintegration Center (Cleveland)		2013	female	
<b>Pennsylvania</b>				
28. SCI Cambridge Springs (Cambridge Springs)	ed.-Meadville Lions Club	1994	female	10/4
<b>South Carolina</b>				
29. Leath Correctional Facility (Greenwood)	education	2002	female	13/13

<u>State/Program</u>	<u>Operated by</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>#Inmates/ Transcribers</u>
<b>South Dakota</b>				
30. South Dakota State Penitentiary (Sioux Falls)	industries	1983	male	34/12
<b>Texas</b>				
31. TDCJ Mtn View Unit Braille/Computer Recovery Facility-Gatesville	education & industries	1999	female	92
<b>Virginia</b>				
32. Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women (Troy)	education	2008	female	20/8
<b>Washington</b>				
33. Washington Corrections Center for Women (Gig Harbor)	school for the blind	1997	female	16/16
<b>West Virginia</b>				
34. Huttonsville Correctional Facility (Huttonsville)	industries	1985	male	6/4
<b>Wisconsin</b>				
35. Oshkosh Correctional Institution (Oshkosh)	education	1997	male	20/18
<b>Wyoming</b>				
36. Wyoming Medium Correctional Institution (Torrington)	industries	2010	male	9/8

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**Professionals in these states have expressed an interest in starting a braille program:**

Louisiana: EOT Robin King, LA Dept. of Education & School for the Visually Impaired, 2013; Cindy Robinson, Teacher of VI, Oct. 2014  
Maine: Michael Shannon, ME Correctional Center (Windham), 2013  
Minnesota: EOT Kristen Oien, MN Dept. of Education & Marcie Koetke, MN Dept. of Corrections, 2014  
Montana: Sharon Sager, MT Correctional Enterprises & Steve Fugate, MT School f/t Def & Blind, 2013  
New Mexico: Dep. Warden Pete Perez, Western New Mexico Correctional, 2013; Warden Jeff Wrigley, Lea Co. Correctional Facility, 2014  
New York: EOT Barbara Lemen (2015)  
Tennessee: Ralph Thompson (brother-in-law of Gary Mudd, APH Vice President for Public Affairs), 2014  
Utah: Hollie Murdock, Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, 2014

**Braille programs have ceased operations in these states/institutions:**

Kansas (Elsworth): Elsworth Correctional Institution-related service (2014)  
Massachusetts (Norfolk): Bay State Correctional Center (2014)  
New York (Napanoch): Eastern New York Correctional (2014)  
Pennsylvania (Doylestown): Bucks County Correctional Facility-related service (2014)







American Printing House  
for the Blind, Inc.



## **Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program (BTAP)**

*FY2016*

### **Eligibility Criteria and Application Process**

*Thank you for your interest in the FY2016 Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program which will operate from October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016. To be considered for this apprentice program, please review the Eligibility Criteria below carefully. If you meet these criteria, determine which application category applies to you (Current or Future), and follow the application directions.*

### **BTAP Eligibility Criteria**

To qualify for this model reentry program, applicants must have...

- Participated in a prison braille program that is affiliated with the National Prison Braille Network. (Membership is free and open to all programs.)
- Earned Literary Braille Certification through the NLS (National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress).
- For Current Applicants: earned at least one advanced certification: Textbook Formatting, Literary Braille Proofreading, Nemeth Braille, Nemeth Braille Proofreading, Music, or Unified English Braille (UEB).
- Gained tactile graphics design and production experience.
- A commitment to pursuing a career in braille transcription.
- Motivation to learn all aspects of accessible media production, including electronic file manipulation.

To be eligible for the FY2016 program, offenders must either have already been released from prison, or have a Parole Board hearing date or a serve-out/max-out date prior to or on June 1, 2016. This will allow time to help participants make a smooth transition to the apprenticeship in Louisville. APH staff will work with inmate case workers and parole officers during this time to ensure that release requirements (if any) are fulfilled.

Regretfully, since APH is located next door to a school, sex offenders will not be eligible to participate in BTAP.

## BTAP Application Process

APH is currently accepting applications in two categories: Current and Future.

### Current Applicants

These individuals have either already been released from prison, or will either meet the Parole Board or serve-out/max-out prior to or on June 1, 2016. They must send to APH a completed Application Form, along with all Attachments requested below:

- A personal letter or essay explaining why you are applying for BTAP. Include:
  - ✓ a description of your experience in the prison braille program,
  - ✓ what braille means to you,
  - ✓ your career goals,
  - ✓ challenges you face to achieving these goals following release, and
  - ✓ resources available to you upon release to complete your goals.
- A resume or list of your transcription work in the braille program.
- A copy of each braille certificate received.
- 3-5 samples of tactile graphics you created independently (if you produce tactile graphics).
- 15-20 pages of braille transcription work you produced independently, along with print copies of these pages. Braille pages should include transcriber generated pages, preliminary pages, and main body pages.
- At least two (but no more than five) letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a corrections professional (preferably the braille program manager) who can speak about your conduct during incarceration and your tenure in the braille program. If you have worked with a vision professional who can attest to your braille production experience and transcription quality, a letter from this individual would be helpful.

People writing letters of recommendations can send them to APH separately from the application if they prefer. They should include the full name of the Current Applicant, and send letters to Nancy Lacewell at the address below.

Current Applicants will not be considered for BTAP until their entire application packet has been received (completed Application Form, and **all requested Attachments**). APH will contact Current Applicants after receiving completed packets to inform them of their individual status as a BTAP candidate.

## Future Applicants

These individuals are currently working in prison braille programs and hope to be considered for the BTAP program in the future. Their serve-out/max-out date or next parole board hearing date will occur after June 1, 2016. Future Applicants should send to APH a completed Application Form, but they do not need to send along the Attachments requested for Current Applicants. However, these transcribers are encouraged to begin developing their full application packet.

APH will contact all BTAP applicants to confirm receipt of their applications.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **All applications and packets should be mailed to:**

*Nancy Lacewell*  
**BTAP Application**  
*American Printing House for the Blind*  
*1839 Frankfort Avenue*  
*Louisville, KY 40206*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Questions should be directed to a member of the BTAP Implementation Team:*

**Nancy Lacewell**, BTAP Coordinator

*Phone: 502-899-2339; or 800-223-1839, ext. 339*

*Email: nlacewell@aph.org*

**Becky Snider**, BTAP Administrator

*Phone: 502-899-2356; or 800-223-1839, ext. 356*

*Email: rsnider@aph.org*

**Jayma Hawkins**, BTAP Apprentice Mentor

*Phone: 502-899-2372; or 800-223-1839, ext. 372*

*Email: jhawkins@aph.org*







American Printing House  
for the Blind, Inc.



National Prison  
Braille Network

## Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program (BTAP)

FY2016

(October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016)

### Application

*Please print out, complete, and mail application to APH as instructed on last page.*

*[Use the blank page on the back if you need additional space.]*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_

Prison ID Number \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Correctional Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Prison Braille Program \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Release Date (if already released) \_\_\_\_\_

#### A. Please read carefully and check the appropriate box for your situation now:

##### **Current Applicant**

- ☐ I have either already been released from prison (date noted above), **or**
- ☐ My next parole board meeting or serve out/max out date will occur before June 1, 2016. I have read the BTAP Eligibility Requirements and I believe that I qualify for this pilot program. I am sending to APH a completed application, **along with all attachments requested**. I understand that APH will contact me of receiving my completed application and attachments to discuss my status as a BTAP candidate.

*Signature of Applicant* \_\_\_\_\_

##### **Future Applicant**

- ☐ I am currently participating in a prison braille program and my next parole board meeting or serve out/max out date will occur after June 1, 2016. I am sending to APH a completed application form **without the attachments requested**. APH will confirm receiving my application.

Also, I understand that I may submit an updated application with attachments for consideration as a Current Applicant when I meet those requirements, as listed above and if BTAP is still operational after September 30, 2016.

*Signature of Applicant* \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Contacts**

If you have not yet been released and we cannot reach you directly, who should we call? For example, a professional working within the prison as braille program manager, caseworker, vision professional...

Primary Contact

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary contact

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Status and Availability**

Current Charge(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of the crime(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Length of sentence: \_\_\_\_\_ Month/year sentence began: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times you have appeared before the parole board on present sentence:

\_\_\_\_\_

Next parole board hearing scheduled (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated release date: \_\_\_\_\_

Serve out/max out date: \_\_\_\_\_

Following release, will you be restricted in any way that could impact braille transcription efforts (such as, not allowed to use computers)? If so, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional information about your release that may be helpful to program planners:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**D. Education (not related to Braille)**

Highest grade completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Diplomas/degrees/certificates received:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional education programs and years completed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other programs of any type that you have participated in while incarcerated to prepare for release: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Computer software programs you are familiar with: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**E. Work Experience (not related to Braille)**

Jobs held while incarcerated:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Jobs held prior to incarceration, and dates of employment:

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates (month/year): from \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates (month/year): from \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_



**F. Braille Transcription Qualifications**

Date you joined the prison braille program: \_\_\_\_\_

Certifications you have earned and dates completed:

_____ NLS Literary Braille	Date: _____
_____ NLS Literary Braille Proofreading	_____
_____ NLS Nemeth Braille	_____
_____ NLS Nemeth Braille Proofreading	_____
_____ NLS Music Braille	_____
_____ NLS Music Associate	_____
_____ NBA Textbook Formatting	_____

Other braille certifications earned and dates completed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Certification work in process (i.e., *Nemeth Code, Lesson 12*):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Computer programs used in braille transcription: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**G. Tactile Graphics Experience**

Check the level that best describes your tactile graphics experience:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Novice - I know very little about tactile graphics design and production.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Intermediate - I learned the basics of tactile graphics design and production.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced - I have a lot of experience designing and producing tactile graphics using various media.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Expert - I am confident that I can design and produce all types of tactile graphics with little direction from others.

Approximately how many tactile graphics masters have you created: \_\_\_\_\_

What processes have you used to create tactile graphics (such as collage, computer generated, Tiger...)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What software have you used to create graphics (such as Corel Draw)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**H. After Release**

Check areas of additional training and/or experience you would like to pursue:

- ☐ Computers and/or software. Indicate program(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Textbook formatting
- ☐ Tactile graphics
- ☐ Operating an independent braille business
- ☐ Marketing braille services
- ☐ UEB (Unified English Braille Code)

List all other areas in which you hope to improve your braille-related skills:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I. Explain why you are an ideal candidate for the Braille Transcribers Apprentice Program (BTAP):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail completed application to:**

Nancy Lacewell, Public Affairs  
BTAP Application  
American Printing House for the Blind  
1839 Frankfort Ave  
Louisville KY 40206





American Printing House  
for the Blind, Inc.



## **Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program**

*A Model Transition and Reentry Initiative  
FY 2016*

*Through the Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program (BTAP), APH will assist transcribers who learned braille and earned national certifications while incarcerated as they transition back into society. Participants will live in Louisville for a few months while they receive training to learn about independent braille production, small business management, and networking. At the end of the program period, APH may choose to subcontract with them for braille transcription services after they return to their home states. If there are braille transcription positions open at APH for which apprentices who have completed BTAP are qualified, they are welcome to submit an application.*

### **Purpose**

BTAP addresses two clearly identified and reciprocal needs:

- The field of vision's current and anticipated need for more highly qualified braille transcribers, and
- The need of transcribers who learned braille in prison for guidance, a structured environment, and networking opportunities as they establish braille transcription careers following release.

### **Rationale**

#### APH

Since 1879, the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has worked in partnership with the federal government to identify the unique learning needs of students working below college level who are blind and visually impaired, and to develop and produce accessible education tools and materials for this population. As a line item in the President's budget, APH receives an annual appropriation from the U.S. Department of Education to research and manufacture educational products. APH completes a census each year of students with vision loss, and then provides the bulk of appropriation funding to states and outlying areas to purchase APH products for their students on a per-capita basis.



Since braille requires considerable time to learn and become proficient, there are significant challenges to building a qualified transcriber workforce. Adding to this challenge, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) voted in 2012 to adopt an updated braille code (Unified English Braille or UEB) for the United States. With implementation of UEB, scheduled to begin with textbook orders for the 2015-2016 school year, some older, more experienced transcribers have indicated that they will retire or leave the profession rather than learn the new Code. All transcribers will need UEB instruction and training if they are to maintain certification to transcribe textbooks. APH will endeavor to provide this training for all BTAP apprentices if they have not received it prior to entering the program.

### National Prison Braille Network

In 2000, APH partnered with the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women and Kentucky Correctional Industries to establish KCI Braille Services in Pewee Valley, Kentucky. That same year, APH launched the National Prison Braille Network. Vision and corrections professionals working with prison braille programs across the country join the network, free of charge, and many participate in the National Prison Braille Forum hosted by APH each October in conjunction with its Annual Meeting. There are currently 36 known prison braille programs nationwide, with a combined total of approximately 800 male and 200 female participants.

The primary purpose of the Network is to provide people working directly with braille production facilities behind prison walls with opportunities to discuss common concerns, identify useful resources, celebrate accomplishments, and explore potential solutions to the unique challenges that these programs present. Typically, about 60 professionals attend the Forum each year. They consistently indicate that this conference provides them with a much-needed and meaningful chance to network and learn from colleagues across the country.

A major concern of Network members, which has been expressed repeatedly over the past 15 years, is that too frequently, highly qualified, motivated, experienced transcribers in prison braille programs across the country do not continue transcribing braille following their release. Starting a business of any kind requires seed money to purchase hardware, software, and supplies, and to cover other operating expenses until revenue is produced. Building connections within the transcription industry is also critical for transcribers as they market their skills, as is the need for continuing education on braille code changes, tactile graphic production, and much more.

In some instances, corrections policies prohibit relationships among prison staff and former offenders following release, severing critical ties with the braille production network. And unfortunately, many offenders leaving prison after serving a long term do not have a support system or the funds needed to get a transcription operation up and running. Braille transcription is an ideal "cottage industry" and, historically, most transcribers have produced braille in their own homes or offices.

At this point, however, the field of vision is losing many highly experienced transcribers who want to continue transcribing upon release from prison, but simply don't have the resources to do so. APH staff coordinating the National Prison Braille Network continually receive requests for help from offenders who are either soon to be released or recently released and are eager and anxious to continue their transcription work on the outside. Until BTAP was created, no mechanism was in place to provide the support these transcribers' needs

## **Program Overview**

During FY2016, APH will identify up to four qualified transcribers from prison braille programs, and bring them to Louisville for a period of time -- estimated to be between two and six months. They will apprentice at APH as they receive the additional training, work experience, and networking opportunities necessary to establish successful independent transcription careers when they return to their home states. The level of training and work experience needed and the length of time each transcriber will apprentice at APH will be determined on an individual basis. Continual evaluation of work skills will be conducted throughout the BTAP experience.

APH may choose to subcontract with transcribers who have successfully completed BTAP for their braille transcription services after they return home. If there are braille transcription positions open at APH for which apprentices who have completed BTAP are qualified, they are welcome to submit an application.

## **Apprentice Compensation**

While in Louisville, braille transcriber apprentices will be paid the same rate that APH pays beginning transcribers (currently \$14.25 per hour). In addition, the program will cover expenses for travel to and from Louisville, an allowance for housing and transportation (for up to 2 months), and a daily stipend for meals and other essentials (for up to 30 days).

The program mentor will help apprentices set up checking and savings accounts (if they have not done so already) and provide budget training, as needed. Apprentices must understand that when the daily stipend and monthly allowance periods end, they will be expected to cover their own expenses. They will be strongly encouraged to save as much of their salary as possible during the first two months of BTAP while this extra income helps them with living expenses.

## **Participation Eligibility**

To qualify for this model reentry program, applicants must have...

- Participated in a prison braille program that is affiliated with the National Prison Braille Network. (Membership is free and open to all programs.)
- Earned Literary Braille Certification through the NLS (National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress).
- For Current Applicants: earned at least one advanced certification: Textbook Formatting, Literary Braille Proofreading, Nemeth Braille, Nemeth Braille Proofreading, Music.
- Gained tactile graphics design and production experience.
- A commitment to pursuing a career in braille transcription.
- Motivation to learn all aspects of accessible media production, including electronic file manipulation.

To be eligible for the FY2016 program, offenders must have either already been released from prison, or have a Parole Board hearing date or a serve-out/max-out date prior to or on June 1, 2016. This will allow time to help participants make a smooth transition to the apprenticeship in Louisville. APH staff will work with inmate case workers and parole officers during this time to ensure that release requirements (if any) are fulfilled.

Regretfully, since APH is located next door to a school, sex offenders are not eligible to participate in BTAP.

## **Application Process**

While funding is currently available for only FY2016 (October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016), the APH Prison Braille Advisory Team will be working to secure additional funding to continue BTAP into the future. For that reason, there are two application categories: Current and Future. **Current Applicants** have either already been released from prison, or have a Parole Board hearing date or a serve-out/max-out date prior to or on June 1, 2016. Future Applicants are those who will appear before the Parole Board or serve-out/max-out after June 1, 2016.

Information on **Future Applicants** will be kept on file as potential candidates should BTAP continue into the future. Data gathered from future applicants will assist with APH efforts to show the need for BTAP support. Both Current and Future Applicants must complete a BTAP Application Form and send it to APH. Current Applicants must also send several attachments along with the Application Form, as follows:

- A personal letter or essay explaining why they are applying for BTAP, including:
  - ✓ a description of their experience in the prison braille program,
  - ✓ what braille means to them,
  - ✓ their career goals,
  - ✓ challenges they will face to achieving these goals following release, and
  - ✓ resources available to them upon release to complete their goals.



- A resume or list of their transcription work in the braille program.
- A copy of each braille certificate earned.
- 3-5 samples of tactile graphics the transcriber created independently (if he/she produces tactile graphics).
- 15-20 pages of braille transcription work the transcriber produced independently, along with print copies of these pages. Braille pages should include transcriber generated pages, preliminary pages, and main body pages.
- At least two (but no more than five) letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a corrections professional (preferably the braille program manager) who can speak about the transcriber's conduct during incarceration and tenure in the braille program. If the applicant works or has worked with a vision professional who can attest to his/her braille production experience and transcription quality, a letter from that individual would be helpful.

People writing letters of recommendations can send them to APH separately from the application if they prefer. They should include the full name of the Current Applicant, and send letters to Nancy Lacewell at the address below.

Current Applicants will not be considered for BTAP until their entire application packet has been received (completed Application Form, and all requested Attachments). APH will contact Current Applicants after receiving their completed packet to inform them of their individual status as a BTAP candidate.

## **Program Staffing**

An APH staff member, Jayma Hawkins, who is a braille textbook editor and has considerable education and experience in the field of criminal justice will spend approximately 10 hours each week mentoring apprentices and handling all "off work hours" issues, such as transportation, housing, and meeting parole requirements. APH's Coordinator of Braille Transcription Services will oversee braille training once apprentices arrive at APH. These two professionals will work together to customize an "action plan" for each participant upon hire, projecting an approximate length of time that each will receive training at APH.

The APH Prison Braille Advisory Committee and Public Affairs staff managing the National Prison Braille Network will administer BTAP and provide support as needed to ensure that BTAP apprentices have the training, tools, and contacts they will need to establish successful careers.



**Timeline: FY2016** (October 1, 2015-September 30, 2016)

BTAP's second year will be launched on October 7, 2015 at the National Prison Braille Forum. Application packets will be made available at that time and the review and selection process will begin immediately.

## **Partners**

APH partners with hundreds of professionals and organizations around the world each year to develop products, programs, and services that make life better for individuals with vision loss. Key to the success of BTAP is that we reach out to local, state, and national entities for both their expertise and their support.

On the national level, APH staff coordinating the National Prison Braille Network has worked for many years to keep both the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the U.S. Department of Education, Correctional Education Division, informed on the purpose and scope of prison braille programs. With our encouragement, the Department of Justice added "prison braille programs" to the list of programs eligible to receive federal funding through Second Chance Act grants, and two prison braille programs received grants through the 2008 funding cycle, totaling \$1.5 million. Officials with whom we have communicated in these departments are extremely supportive of prison braille programs and have asked to be kept informed of related initiatives.

On the state level, Kentucky Department of Corrections Commissioner LaDonna Thompson is well-informed on prison braille programs and supports KCI (Kentucky Correctional Industries) Braille Services. In particular, she helped APH forge a relationship with the officer responsible for Interstate Compact in Kentucky, which is instrumental in coordinating the transfer of BTAP candidates who are released from prison on parole from their home state to Kentucky. APH has worked in partnership with the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women and Kentucky Correctional Industries to create and maintain this prison braille program since 2000. APH has subsequently hired four braille transcribers released from this program for full-time employment.

On the local level, we have established a working partnership with Prodigal Ministries, a non-profit agency that provides stability and support to former prisoners, helping them develop the community living skills and accountability that they need upon release to redirect their lives and become productive citizens. With three transitional houses for men and one for women in the Louisville area, Prodigal Ministries is partnering with APH on BTAP to make housing available for program participants, and to provide access to all transitional services that the agency provides (such as alcohol and drug counseling, assistance with parole requirements, access to clothing...). Prodigal Ministries works with many other non-profits across the region (clothes closets, food pantries, volunteer mentors...), and APH is working to secure their support for BTAP.

In addition to these resources, APH is a member of the Greater Louisville Reentry Coalition and has presented information on prison braille programs to this group. Member agencies have offered their services to help with reentry initiatives in the Louisville area.

## **Successful Outcomes**

To ensure a positive experience for transcribers and a positive return on investment for APH, pre- and post-program testing will be conducted with all apprentices. Two separate checklists will be used -- one for technical skills (braille, computer and software), and one for "soft skills" (time management, work ethic, personal budgeting...). These checklists will be completed with each individual apprentice to customize goals and objectives, and to establish a timeframe for completion of the program.

What will ultimately determine the success of BTAP is whether or not APH successfully adds knowledgeable, productive professionals to the braille transcription workforce across the country. We hope to contract with BTAP alumni for braille transcription services upon completion of the program. However, if participants in the program successfully complete goals and objectives and end up producing braille for individuals or agencies other than APH after returning home, we will consider the program successful at building these transcription careers since they will further advance opportunities for people with vision loss to read and learn.

## **APH National Prison Braille Advisory Committee and BTAP Development Team**

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Jane Thompson, Director of Accessible Textbooks





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## Braille Transcriber Apprentice Program (BTAP)

### **BTAP Sustainability Plan**

Proposed

APH has applied for foundation funding to work in partnership with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) and the Center for Nonprofit Excellence (CNPE) in Louisville to develop a BTAP Sustainability Plan that will:

- 1) Identify potential funding sources and self-sustaining practices.
- 2) Design a 5-year pro forma for revenue and expense guidelines.
- 3) Identify best practices, resources, and potential partners.
- 4) Identify federal government officials who can assist with BTAP.
- 5) Identify barriers to program success and propose solutions.
- 6) Establish guidelines for a culture of acceptance of apprentices at APH.

APH's Board of Trustees has allocated a portion of the funding needed for this project. A funding request is pending with the Community Foundation of Louisville, and a decision will be reached by mid-December. If adequate funding is secured, the project will begin on January 1, 2016, and a customized plan of action will be produced around August 1, 2016. If CFL decides not to fund the project, APH will seek funding from other sources.

Areas of specific research that NCCD will conduct are:

- Barriers to success (of BTAP) and potential solutions,
- Successful transitioning,
- Navigating the corrections system, including parole boards, and
- Building a culture of acceptance at APH.

One of the key components of the final plan of action is a set of guidelines and resources that will enable APH to create an awareness campaign to build relationships and educate stakeholder groups -- US Departments of Justice, Education, and Labor officials, parole board members, parole officers, case workers, and counselors -- on the positive aspects of prison braille programs and the legitimacy of braille transcription as a viable career for former inmates.









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